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Human development and international migration

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Abstract

Migration is one of the most serious issues of economy and society. For this reason, the 2009 Global Human Development Report focuses on the issues of migration and human development. According to the report, many people migrate from their hometown to other regions for survival or better life opportunities. Within this context, this study aims to explore whether human development or the factors (income, education and health) which determine human development play a role in international migration flows, and whether migrants find an opportunity to increase their human development levels. In line with this aim, the direction of international migration flows was analyzed having compared both the 2011 human development indexes of the countries which compose the 27 biggest migration corridors as of 2010 and the main components of the human development index, which are health index, education index and income index. According to the results of the study, migrants move to more developed regions in terms of human development and among the factors which determine human development in terms of migration the most important ones are respectively income or education and health. Therefore, the removal of obstacles before international migration is considered to play a great role in the increase of human development or global welfare.

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1. Introduction

According to Sen (2004:17-18) development is a process of expanding real freedoms that people enjoy. This concept, which focuses on freedoms in the development process, contradicts the limited concepts of development which identify development with the growth of gross national product, increase in individual income, industrialization and social modernization. The increase of gross national product or individual income is a means of expanding individuals' freedom. However, in addition to income, there are other determiners like social and economic arrangements (such as education and health services) and civil and political rights that are influential in terms of freedoms (Sen, 2004:17-18).

High rates of national income growth are not sufficient for a country to be named as a developed country. Due to the existence of unsolved social problems in a number of economically-developed countries, it is seen to be essential to build a better relationship between economic growth and human development. Within this framework, human development indexes, which measure socio-economic development levels of countries, have been published regularly since 1990 by UNDP (United Nations Development Program) (Demir, 2006:1). Human Development Index (HDI) is an alternative to traditional means of measurement such as income levels and economic growth rates which are used to measure national development. Human Development Index (HDI) measures average

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achievements of a country in terms of three basic dimensions of human development, which are health, knowledge and income. It was first developed by the Pakistani economist Mahbul ul Haq in collaboration with the Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen and other prominent thinkers of the first Human Development Report in 1990. A long and healthy life, access to knowledge and a decent standard of living are three basic dimensions used in the measurement of Human Development Index, which is a simple summary index. A long and healthy life is still measured by life expectancy at birth. However, as of the 2010 Human Development Report, access to knowledge is measured by combining the expected years of schooling for a school-age child in a country today with the mean years of prior schooling for adults aged 25 and older; life standard is measured by per capita gross national income (GNI) adjusted for purchasing power (UNDP, 2010).

According to Anand and Sen (1994), since people are the real product of all activities, development should focus on the enlargement of people's achievements, freedoms and abilities. What really matters is not the properties or incomes acquired by individuals but the life that they lead (Anand and Sen, 1994). People are the real wealth of a nation. The main aim of development is to provide people a suitable environment for them to enjoy a long, healthy and creative life. Human development is a process that expands people's choices. The most critical choices are related to people's access to education, a long and healthy life and a satisfactory life standard (UNDP, 1990: 9-10). As the 2009 Global Human Development Report states people's ability to decide where to live through migration is among the basic parameters of human freedom. Migration plays an extremely active role in improving individuals' and families' income, education and social engagement and providing a better future for their children. According to the surveys carried out with migrants, it is stated that migrants feel happy in their countries of destination in spite of the adaptation process and several obstacles they confront (UNDP, 2009a; 2009b). Within this context, it is of vital importance in terms of human development to remove the obstacles before migration, which is a process that enlarges people's choices.

The increasing migration waves in the world indicate that people use their freedom of migration so as to improve their human development levels. For instance, according to the 2010 World Migration Report published by the International Organization for Migration (2010), the number of migrants, which used to be 150 million in 2000 has risen to 214 million in 2010 and it might rise to 405 million in 2050. 214 million migrants in 2010 means about 3,1% of the world population. According to the OECD (2009), if the term "north" is used to refer to the developed world and "south" is used to refer to the developing world, one third of the world's migrants move from north to north, another third move from south to north; and the final third move from south to south. As the 2009 Global Human Development Report by UNDP (2009) states the majority of migrants move within the borders of their own countries. The number of internal migrants is about 740 million and this number is about four times more than the number of international migrants (UNDP, 2009a; 2009b).

This study aims to determine whether human development and the factors (income, education, health) which are used to measure human development are influential in the process of migration.

Within this framework, the following questions were tried to be answered:

- Which of the factors (income, education, health) that are deemed as the main components of human development in international migration flows is the most important?
- As a result of the migration process do migrants really find an opportunity to increase their human development, and thus their welfare?

2. Literature

Many studies regarding international and internal migration flows usually focus on economic determinants of migration. For instance, Ravenstein (1885) states that while higher income and more employment opportunities influence migration in a positive way, distance that increases the cost of moving influences migration in a negative way. In her study, Lazareva (2008) deals with the possibility of finding a job, expected lifetime income in case of finding a job, cost of moving and cost of living in the migration destination as the determinants of migrants' choice of destination. Gallaway and Vedder (1971) name relatively low wages and high unemployment rates in United Kingdom, migrant sending country, as push factors but relatively high wages and low unemployment rates in the

United States, migrant receiving country, as pull factors. Hatton (1995) explains the emigration period between 1870 and 1913 in the United Kingdom in terms of foreign/home wage rates, foreign employment rate, home employment rate and the stock of migrants in the migration destination.

However, the reasons why people migrate are not only economic like income and employment differences but also the existence of infrastructure investments in big cities comprising better education and health facilities as Issah et al. (2005) state. The most significant study on this topic is the 2009 Global Human Development Report by UNDP (2009a; 2009b), which states that the three-fourths of international migrants are moving to the countries which have higher human development than their home countries. Correspondingly, in order to explain the internal migration in Turkey, Kandemir (2010) takes human development index as an independent variable to the model and finds it statistically meaningful. In the same study, it is suggested that among the countries that compose significant migration corridors in the world, migrant-receiving countries have usually higher human development when compared to migrant-sending countries.

This study takes Kandemir's study in 2010 further and not only compares migrant-sending and migrant-receiving countries in terms of human development indexes but also in terms of the components of human development index, which are income, health and education with the aim of exploring which factor (income, health and education) is more influential in migration flows. It also aims to gain a new perspective of migration exploring the effect of migration on migrants' human development levels while the literature mentioned above usually focuses on the determining factors (reasons) of migration.

3. Materials and Method

In order to achieve the aim of this study, the 2011 human development indexes of the partner countries which compose 27 biggest migration corridors in the world as of 2010 and the components of that index (income, education and health) were compared and their levels of importance on migration flows was analyzed.

Migration data were collected from the World Bank while human development index data were collected from the United Nations Development Program.

4. Findings

As seen in the additional table 2, no data was obtained about Puerto Rico and West Bank and Gaza, which are migrant-sending regions. For this reason, three migration corridors, which are Puerto Rico-United States, West Bank-Gaza-Syrian Arab Republic, and West Bank-Gaza-Jordan, were left out of evaluation. The following table shows the migration corridors where migrants move to the countries with the indexes of lower human development, education, health and income.

Table 1. The Corridors Where Migrants Move to the Countries with Lower Indexes of Human Development, Education, Health and Income

Human Development:				
No	Migration Corridors*	Human Development Index**		
		Migrant-Sending Country		Migrant-Receiving Country
20	India-Bangladesh	0.547		0.500
30	Côte d'Ivoire-Burkina Faso	0.400		0.331
Education:				
No	Migration Corridors*	Education Index**		
		Migrant-Sending Country		Migrant-Receiving Country
20	India-Bangladesh	0.450		0.415
30	Côte d'Ivoire-Burkina Faso	0.304		0.187
Health:				
No	Migration Corridors*	Health Index**		

		Migrant-Sending Country		Migrant-Receiving Country
2	Bangladesh-India	0.772		0.717
14	Burkina Faso-Côte d'Ivoire	0.559		0.558
21	Republic of Korea-United States	0.956		0.923
24	Cuba-United States	0.933		0.923
Income:				
No	Migration Corridors*	Income Index**		
		Migrant-Sending Country		Migrant-Receiving Country
20	India-Bangladesh	0.508		0.391
30	Côte d'Ivoire-Burkina Faso	0.377		0.349

Source: *World Bank (2011), Top Migration Corridors (excluding the Former Soviet Union), 2010", Migration and Remittances Factbook 2011 2nd Edition, p.6, <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTLAC/Resources/Factbook2011-Ebook.pdf>, (Accessed: 05.03.2012).

**UNDP, International Human Development Indicators, <http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/tables/>, (Accessed: 20.03.2012).

When the partner countries which compose the migration corridor are compared in terms of human development indexes, the migrant-receiving countries in the corridors of India-Bangladesh, which ranks 20th, and Ivory Coast(Côte d'Ivoire)-Burkina Faso, which ranks 30th, have lower human development indexes than the migrant-sending countries as shown in the table 1. The main reason, as suggested in the additional table 2, is that there is a highly reverse migration between Ivory Coast(Côte d'Ivoire)-Burkina Faso and India-Bangladesh.

As the Network theory state migration increases international information and travel between countries. Thanks to this network, more families reunite and a second generation of migrants appear (Xenogiani, 2006). This situation might sometimes cause a reverse migration movement as in the case of Burkina Faso-Ivory Coast (Côte d'Ivoire) and Bangladesh-India. Migrants in 25 out of 27 migration corridors, which equals to 92.59% of the corridors, have a tendency to move to the countries with a higher human development index while migrants in only 2 out of 27 migration corridors, which equals to almost 7.41 % of the corridors, move to the countries with a lower human development index.

As suggested in the table above, apart from the three corridors of which there is no data on migrant sending countries, in only 2 out of 27 migration corridors, migrants move to a country with a lower index of income, and in only 2 corridors they move to a country with a lower index of education and in only 4 corridors they move to a country with a lower index of health. Therefore, in addition to the human development levels, the levels of income, education and health also play a role in determining international migration flows. The most crucial of these factors are respectively income or education, and health.

5. Conclusion and suggestions

Migration flows are usually from the countries with lower human development levels to the countries with higher human development levels. The most significant indicator of this finding is that migrants move to the countries with lower human development in just two of the 27 migration corridors. Therefore migrants access to higher human development, and thus welfare through international migration flows.

Besides, main components of human development, which are education, income, and health, emerge as important determinants of international migration flows. According to the results of the study, the most significant of these factors are respectively income or education and health. In most of the above mentioned studies (Ravenstein, 1885; Gallaway and Vedder, 1971; Lazareva, 2008; Hatton, 1995, Kandemir, 2010) economic factors of income, wages and employment are suggested to be determinative of migration flows. On the other hand, spread of brain drain and, within this context, expert and student migration to developed countries render the factor of education an inevitable determinant of migration.

According to Sen (2004:108), an individual's capacity, which is a kind of freedom, means alternative composition of functions possible to be achieved by that individual (Sen, 2004:108). Therefore, people who usually move to the countries with better human development as a result of the international migration flows are increasing their capacities and having an access to higher income, better education and health facilities. In this new approach of development, which is human-centered, the removal of obstacles before the international migration will make it possible to increase global welfare.

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No	Migration Corridors*	Number of migrants (2010) (millions)*	Human Development Index (HDI) (2011)**		Education Index (2011)**		Health Index (2011)**		Income index (2011)**	
			Migrant-Sending Country	Migrant-Receiving Country	Migrant-Sending Country	Migrant-Receiving Country	Migrant-Sending Country	Migrant-Receiving Country	Migrant-Sending Country	Migrant-Receiving Country
1	Mexico–United States	11.6	0.770	0.910	0.726	0.939	0.898	0.923	0.700	0.869
2	Bangladesh–India	3.3	0.500	0.547	0.415	0.450	0.772	0.717	0.391	0.508
3	Turkey–Germany	2.7	0.699	0.905	0.583	0.928	0.851	0.953	0.689	0.838
4	China–Hong Kong SAR, China	2.2	0.687	0.898	0.623	0.837	0.843	0.990	0.618	0.874
5	India–United Arab Emirates	2.2	0.547	0.846	0.450	0.741	0.717	0.892	0.508	0.916
6	China–United States	1.7	0.687	0.910	0.623	0.939	0.843	0.923	0.618	0.869
7	Philippines–United States	1.7	0.644	0.910	0.684	0.939	0.769	0.923	0.508	0.869
8	Afghanistan–Iran, Islamic Rep	1.7	0.398	0.707	0.367	0.640	0.452	0.836	0.380	0.662
9	India–United States	1.7	0.547	0.910	0.450	0.939	0.717	0.923	0.508	0.869
10	Puerto Rico–United States	1.7	...	0.910	...	0.939	...	0.923	...	0.869
11	West Bank and Gaza–Syrian Arab Republic	1.5	...	0.632	...	0.534	...	0.881	...	0.537
12	India–Saudi Arabia	1.5	0.547	0.770	0.450	0.689	0.717	0.850	0.508	0.781
13	Indonesia–Malaysia	1.4	0.617	0.761	0.584	0.730	0.779	0.855	0.518	0.704
14	Burkina Faso–Côte d'Ivoire	1.3	0.331	0.400	0.187	0.304	0.559	0.558	0.349	0.377
15	United Kingdom–Australia	1.2	0.863	0.929	0.815	0.981	0.949	0.976	0.832	0.837
16	Vietnam–United States	1.2	0.593	0.910	0.503	0.939	0.870	0.923	0.478	0.869
17	Pakistan–India	1.2	0.504	0.547	0.386	0.450	0.717	0.717	0.464	0.508
18	El Salvador–United States	1.1	0.674	0.910	0.637	0.939	0.823	0.923	0.585	0.869
19	Malaysia–Singapore	1.1	0.761	0.866	0.730	0.751	0.855	0.964	0.704	0.897
20	India–Bangladesh	1.1	0.547	0.500	0.450	0.415	0.717	0.772	0.508	0.391
21	Korea, Rep.–United States	1.1	0.897	0.910	0.934	0.939	0.956	0.923	0.808	0.869
22	Pakistan–Saudi Arabia	1	0.504	0.770	0.386	0.689	0.717	0.850	0.464	0.781
23	Egypt, Arab Rep.–Saudi Arabia	1	0.644	0.770	0.560	0.689	0.840	0.850	0.568	0.781
24	Cuba–United States	1	0.776	0.910	0.876	0.939	0.933	0.923	0.572	0.869
25	Algeria–France	0.9	0.698	0.884	0.652	0.870	0.838	0.971	0.621	0.819
26	Yemen, Rep.–Saudi Arabia	0.9	0.462	0.770	0.310	0.689	0.718	0.850	0.444	0.781
27	West Bank and Gaza–Jordan	0.9	...	0.698	...	0.710	...	0.842	...	0.569
28	Zimbabwe–South Africa	0.9	0.376	0.619	0.566	0.705	0.495	0.517	0.190	0.652
29	Egypt, Arab Rep.–Jordan	0.9	0.644	0.698	0.560	0.710	0.840	0.842	0.568	0.569
30	Côte d'Ivoire–Burkina Faso	0.8	0.400	0.331	0.304	0.187	0.558	0.559	0.377	0.349

Source: *World Bank (2011), Top Migration Corridors (excluding the Former Soviet Union), 2010". Migration and Remittances Factbook 2011 2nd Edition, p.6
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